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## A Survey of Cultural Values among Graduating Indian Students from White Swan High School

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A SURVEY OF CULTURAL VALUES AMONG GRADUATING INDIAN  
STUDENTS FROM WHITE SWAN HIGH SCHOOL

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington State College

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Education

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by  
Leonard Clinton Owen  
August 1970

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When writing of all those who have had a part in the success of an undertaking like this, it is difficult to give credit to all those to whom credit is due. There have been too many people involved to include them all by name.

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Finally, but not last or least, to my wife, Marian, and my three children, who gave up much through the years to make this moment possible, my deepest love and appreciation, for this truly has been an undertaking of the entire family.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The central purpose of education for American Indians has always been to fit them to take their place in the mainstream of American life (11:48). The Indian has not always agreed with this goal and has frequently been a most reluctant student. However, recently the various Indian tribes have exhibited an increased interest in the education of their young people and are taking an active role in furthering it. As a result of this new interest, more Indian young people are remaining in school to complete their high school training.

Acceptance of formal education as a practical necessity brings the Indian student into closer contact with the white culture for longer periods of time than ever before. In so doing, changes are made in their way of life which, in turn, affect their system of values and customs (1:115). What may be happening to the old Indian customs and values becomes a matter of concern to the other members of the tribe and to their teachers.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was (1) to determine to

what degree White Swan Indian high school seniors are turning away from the old customs and values; and (2) to determine Indian student attitudes toward Indian customs and values and toward the continuation of the reservation program.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The changing customs and values in a small group within an ethnic minority is the heart of this problem. That is, how does the Indian student who is graduating from White Swan high school feel about Indian customs and values? A study of their feelings is important for the teacher as he seeks to better understand the Indian students and meet their needs. It is also important to tribal leaders and parents as they plan for the future of the tribe's young people.

### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The questions asked of the students in this study were limited to subjects that were thought to be of importance in determining how the Indian student feels about his ancestral way of life and the continuation of the reservation system. The views of the writer and those who advised him concerning which questions were important may have placed a limitation on the study.

It is also felt that the size of the sample may

have been a limiting factor, as well as the exclusion of those people who became dropouts during their senior year.

Finally, the extent to which the Indian student may have been reluctant to answer items in the questionnaire with candor, due to fear that the information might somehow be used against the best interest of the Indian people, could also have affected the outcome of the study.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study the following terms have been defined.

Acculturation. The processes whereby the culture of a society is modified as the result of contact with the culture of one or more societies.

Culture. The composite of specific ways of thinking, feeling, and acting which an ethnic group devises to meet those problems of adjustment which all human beings have in common.

Mixed-blood. An Indian whose blood lines have been mixed with that of the white race.

Values. The means by which such needs as religious, educational, economic, and recreational are met by the individual within a culture.

## OVERVIEW

In Chapter 2, the literature pertinent to this investigation is summarized. In Chapter 3, the research location is described and the design is discussed. The results of this study, including the way the students responded to the questionnaire and the analysis of their responses, are included in Chapter 4. Conclusions derived from the data and a discussion of the findings are found in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### INDIAN OR WHITE?

A casual visitor to one of the present day encampments of the Yakimas who is curious and wants to learn something about the customs of the tribe is immediately struck by the mixture of the new and old that he sees all around him.

The car and the pick-up truck are much in evidence and leave the impression that here, too, the horse has been almost entirely replaced. The people there sit on the white man's folding chairs, drink his soda pop, eat his hamburgers, speak over an electronic public address system in the white man's tongue, and sometimes use a drum that may have been originally made for making music in a white dance band.

Some are attired in traditional articles of clothing, but for the most part they are wearing apparel that probably came from J. C. Penney, Montgomery Ward, or Sears-Roebuck. They are wearing cowboy boots and hats, western shirts, and pants. The young people are dressed like their white schoolmates, and, if one looks past the

color of their skins, it is difficult to distinguish one group from the other.

On the other hand, the onlooker sees the traditional dances and listens to the singing and chanting that has been handed down from generation to generation. There is the feasting in the traditional manner and the distribution of possessions that belonged to the deceased. Another evidence of the old days are the beautifully beaded pieces of clothing and the feather work. Then, for many, there are also treasured memories of the old days that some think are gone forever or else are fast slipping away.

From all this the viewer might possibly arrive at one of several conclusions. He might think that the Indian culture is going the way of other civilizations. On the other hand, he might conclude that the Indian has only adopted the accoutrements and gimmicks of the white man and that the essential elements of his way of life remain strong and intact. What the casual observer does not see is that there is a conflict between the cultures and that they are competing for the loyalty and support of the Indian and that he is being asked to make choices between the two. As a result, the Indian people have been badly divided as to the best course to follow. There are those who believe that their best interests will be served if tribal ties are strengthened through the education of the young in all the old traditions and customs and through



the maintenance of racial and cultural distinctions by marriage within the tribal group. Others are advocates of assimilation within the white culture and feel that it is only a matter of time before this becomes an accomplished fact, as the Indian begins to mix more and more with the white group. This second group prefer to attend the same school as the whites, accept the same religious practices, adopt white values, and through intermarriage become part of a common heritage (5:339).

### THE INDIAN AND CULTURAL CHANGE

There have been many attempts to change the cultures of various peoples on a large scale. The efforts of the American people to help the Indian adjust to white ways is an example of this kind. Policy toward the Indian has ranged from one of deliberate annihilation, to isolation on reservations, to one of accommodation, in which the Indian has been allowed to choose those things from the white culture which he wants to accept. Writers who have written on the degree of his acceptance have offered a wide range of opinions. Some believe that these experiments have had only limited success, while others feel that the Indian culture has all but been destroyed by the dominant culture and now exists only in a fragmented and piece-meal way. One writer who does not believe that the culture has been

replaced to any appreciable extent with white values is LaFarge, who has this to say:

It would be tiresome and superfluous to recite here all the unsuccessful experiences we have had in the past with programs for de-Indianizing Indians, dissolving their communities, or destroying their cultural heritage. None of our efforts in that direction have born good fruit nor have they enabled us to accomplish the goal on which everyone agrees--to put the Indians on such footing in health, education, understanding of our world and economic opportunity that they can make themselves happy lives without benefit of special status (6:43).

LaFarge further states:

. . . the disintegrationalists manage to ignore entirely the extraordinary record of the Indian in retaining their communities and their existence as Indians in the face of what look like impossible pressures, sometimes extending over centuries (6:44).

Vogt expresses views similar to those of LaFarge:

By the mid-twentieth century it has become apparent to social scientists studying the American Indian that the . . . rate of basic acculturation to White ways is incredibly slower than our earlier assumptions led us to believe (13:137).

Vogt acknowledges the pressures that modern technology is putting on the Indian way of life but contends that his previous claim still holds true:

. . . despite the replacement of Indian material culture with goods, technology and other trappings of the White American culture. Neither are any of the tribes living near the aboriginal level as far as food, clothing, and shelter is concerned. In addition to this, all American Indian populations have undergone a process of increasing involvement with our White socio-cultural system in economic relationships to our market economy; in crucial adjustments to our state and national political systems which now hold the ultimate control of force; and to our educational system, which now provides schools for almost all children; in important connections with Christian missionary movements

that now touch every Indian population. The earlier isolation of the Indian population from the main streams of modern life has decreased markedly in the past few decades. . . . As a result, the language, social structures, and religion have all shown some change as the modern world closes in upon the Indian culture (13:139).

At the other extreme are the people who believe that the Indian culture has been shattered beyond any possibility of saving. They picture the Indian as being forced to move around in sort of a cultural vacuum condemned to wander forever in limbo, unable to make peace with his environment. A few individuals, they say, manage to bridge the gulf between the two cultures and cross over into White society and become, to all intents and purposes, White. For most Indians, this is a predicament which leads to frustration and despair and is leading to the destruction of Indians on a grand scale (3:351).

In 1932 Mead described in detail the disruption of the traditional social, economic, religious, and educational structure of an Indian tribe. She tells of what seemed to be happening to a particular group of Indians in the following way:

. . . The process of cultural disintegration in which the more complex culture gradually breaks down the native culture is as meaningless, as random as is the collapse of a house before a wrecking machine. It is not possible to study the individual in relation to a definite social background. Far less is it possible to find any set of social forms which govern and regularize, signify and define the life of the individual (7:221).

Some writers feel that the process of acculturation has apparently proceeded at a far faster pace and is further advanced among the Northwest Indians than it is elsewhere in the United States. According to Vogt, this is due to the strong acculturative forces that were present at the beginning of white settlement in Oregon and Washington. The availability of desirable land encouraged a rapid increase in population, while, at the same time, the Indian population was not prepared to offer organized resistance to the invaders. As a result, some groups disappeared entirely, while others were reduced to a mere fraction of their original numbers, and today the remainder of these groups live on a reservation which they share. While these cultures have not disappeared, the process has moved much further than it has in other sections of the country (13:139). Some of these people realize that the past is gone. They know where they have been but aren't sure of where they are going (10:38).

#### NEW FACTORS IN CULTURAL CHANGE

In recent years, some new factors have appeared which are exerting powerful influence on the young people of all ethnic groups in their choice of values. These forces are so strong that they may be pushing us toward a truly American culture.

We have seen the importance of the parent decline

as agents of culture transfer, and their place has to some extent been taken by other agencies and groups in our society. Honigman has written about this phenomenon:

The importance of parents as agents of personality formation reduces with the age of the child. In America this decline increases as the growing child comes more and more to respond to the expectations of peers, club members, teachers, and employers, and other associates . . . (4:288).

Then he continues:

. . . Despite the emotional importance still attaching to parents, cultural innovations have considerably modified the influence of parents on the development of roles and values. Mass media of communication, radio, movies, comics and television reveal to the child social norms for particular ages that frequently conflict with parental standards . . . (5:290).

The white teacher and white education are having an increasing influence on the lives of the Indian young people as more of them remain in school for longer periods of time. In years past the attitude of parents and tribal leaders toward education was largely negative. This has changed during recent years, and now for the first time Indians see the need for education. All tribes are actively seeking educational opportunities for themselves and their youth. Formal education has now been accepted and has become an important part of Indian values (12:95).

The Yakima tribe is one group that has gone all out to educate its people and has developed an educational program for its members that is being carried out in cooperation with the public schools in the area. It is a

program that seeks to improve life on the reservation through education, improved housing conditions, and more job opportunities (16:1-2).

The acceptance of white education as a value has certain implications for the Indian culture. By its very nature school is a center of cultural diffusion and serves as a place from which the values and standards of a larger group are dispersed to the community. This is done by imposing these pre-existing community standards upon children (8:21).

The effect of education on the attitudes and values of the Indian child should not be discounted or underestimated. Wax, in studying the matter, says that:

. . . The more the school and educative processes encompass the child, the greater is their impact, if for no other reason than they isolate him from other associations and relationships. Most Americans have come to take for granted and to regard as normal and wholly desirable a system of education that physically separates child from parents for most of the hours of the day and most of the days of the year. . . . Without entering into the merits of this system, it is plain that its introduction into Indian society is thoroughly disruptive of traditional patterns of socialization, social control, and familial labor (14:699).

The impact of education on Indian culture is further substantiated in a recently completed study of Chippewa adolescents, which indicates that Indian high school students are more receptive of white culture than their non-high school counterparts. This is felt to be due partly to the increased intercultural relations of

present day high school students and to the fact that adolescents are more than willing to accept the outside influences that have made themselves felt in today's life. Such things as schools, television, radio, movies, newspapers, etc., affect their choices of values. The study shows that they have goals and opinions that are not unlike those of other teenagers in the United States. The Chippewa students were felt to be very similar to their White counterparts because by remaining in school they had adapted to a situation that had caused their more traditional classmates to drop out, and they have been exposed for longer periods of time to a larger society and the longer they remain in school, the greater is its effect upon them (9:150).

The peer groups to which young people belong now have so much influence in their lives that they can be called a sub-culture. The effect of this upon the national life has been considerable. They have wrought a change in national thinking that has been accompanied by changes in style of dress, moral codes, music, etc. They have also adopted a political philosophy that is different from that of their parents (16:6A). Furthermore, they have declared that they are individuals and as such are opposed to anything that tries to cast them in a common mold. They have also claimed the right to associate with whom they please (2:90).

Indian parents, like the parents of all ethnic groups, have voiced concern over what they see happening to their children. They feel that old ways are being changed and lost because the younger generation no longer is interested in learning them (15:4).



## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH LOCATION AND PROCEDURE

#### RESEARCH LOCATION

The community of White Swan, Washington, is located on the Yakima Indian Reservation about 25 miles southwest of the city of Yakima. The town and surrounding area depends on two main industries for its economic survival. First in importance is farming, which consists mostly of cattle raising, sugar beets, hops, hay, and some seed crops. The second most important industry is lumbering, represented by a sawmill and several logging operations. Of lesser importance, but furnishing a livelihood for a significant number of residents, is the Bureau of Indian Affairs, whose offices are located near Toppenish, and the Fort Simcoe Job Corps Center situated adjacent to the Fort Simcoe State Park. While this is a rural area, it is not isolated, because it is served by several good roads which connect it with the city of Yakima and the nearby towns of Wapato and Toppenish. These towns are only minutes away by car.

The school system, known as the Mount Adams District, came into existence through the consolidation of the Harrah District, a non-high school district, and the

old White Swan School District. It is presently composed of two elementary schools and one four year high school. One of the elementary schools is located in Harrah, a small community ten miles east of White Swan, while the second is located in White Swan, adjacent to the high school. The combined enrollment of the three schools is slightly more than 1,000 students. Breaking this number down into racial groups, it is found that about 50 percent of the students are of Indian ancestry, while most of the remainder are Caucasian, with a sprinkling of Mexican-Americans. In the high school there is a somewhat higher percentage of white students than Indian. This is probably due to a higher dropout rate among the Indian students.

#### RESEARCH PROCEDURE

After a study of the work of other writers, the method of investigation chosen for this study was a questionnaire. It also made use of some informal interviews and the personal observations and experiences of the writer gathered while teaching Indian students in the Mount Adams School District.

The questionnaire was developed with the aid of one of the high school counselors. The questions in the instrument were devised so that they could be answered with a "yes" or "no." In this way the student was able to

indicate a preference for the traditional Indian beliefs, or he could choose to express a less traditional viewpoint.

It was decided to use this method to gather most of the data because it did not require the presence of the writer when the students were answering the questions. The questionnaire was administered by the counselor, who was himself an Indian. This was done by him in an informal way at times convenient for the students. His assistance made it possible to get every member of the group to participate in the problem.

The students from White Swan High School were chosen because they represented the largest single group of Indian students graduating from a Yakima Valley high school in 1969. There were other high schools in the area with a larger number of Indian students in the student body, but they had only two or three graduating Indian seniors.

The questions asked the students in this study have sought to gather some general information. They have also attempted to determine the students' feelings on religious matters and on selected old Indian customs and traditions, they were asked about their relations with their parents and about their feelings concerning the future of the reservation, and something of their plans after graduation. (See questionnaire, Appendix A.) (See also Appendix B for a complete review of student responses.)

## Chapter 4

### ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF RESEARCH DATA

During the last several years there has been a steady increase in the number of Indian students who have graduated from White Swan High School. This growth in the number of Indian students who are finishing school seems to indicate an increased interest on the part of the Indian to remain in school. Figures show that in 1960 there were 5 Indians in a class of 47, or 11 percent; in 1965 there were 7 out of 39, or 18 percent; and in 1969 there were 22 out of 60, or 37 percent. This shows that there has been a steady increase in the percentage of Indian graduates, from about 11 percent in 1960 to almost 37 percent in 1969.

The 20 Indian students in the class of 1969 responded to a questionnaire that was presented to them shortly before their graduation, and the following data is the result. A copy of the questionnaire is found in Appendix A. A complete breakdown of how the respondents have reacted to the items in the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

#### Sex

The student group was composed of 13 males and 7 females. It is not known why there was such a predominance

of males in this group. In earlier years there tended to be more girls graduating than boys. This change could be due to several reasons. First, it is now more difficult for a boy who drops out of school to find any employment except seasonal; second, the students are now receiving more encouragement from both parents and other members of the tribe to remain in school; and third, there seems to be an increased acceptance on the part of the students of the goals and values of the American public.

#### Pure-blood or Mixed-blood

Mixed-bloods outnumber the pure-bloods by 11 to 9. Conversations with some of the students have led the writer to believe that the real difference between the two is not racial but cultural and has to do with the degree to which the full-bloods feel the mixed-bloods hold on to the old ways. In talking to the full-bloods, they have on several occasions referred to the mixed-blood referred to as a "breed" in a tone of voice that made it seem almost like an epithet. The impression was gathered that the pure-blood considered the mixed-blood as being less Indian and more like the White man.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Each respondent was asked 23 questions during the interview. Following is a report on the results of the

combined interviews. These results are also shown in Appendix B, on page 43.

1. Do you speak the Yakima language?

Nineteen students, or 95 percent of the group, said they could not understand their tribal tongue. Language has been thought to be very important to the continuation of a culture. If the language is allowed to die, the culture loses one of the important elements that holds it together. It is a means of culture transfer which helps to unlock the rest of the culture to the child.

2. Do you understand the Yakima language?

The results of this question were similar to the previous one. Only three of the group, or 15 percent, indicated that they understood the language. Sixteen, or 80 percent, said they did not, and one did not answer. This seems to indicate that the tribal language is almost dead, as far as this group is concerned.

3. Are you a member of one of the Christian churches?

Fifty-five percent indicated that they are members of one of the Christian churches, eight, or 40 percent, indicated they are not, and one did not answer.

Religious affiliations are an important indicator of acculturation, and the more traditional Indian is

thought to be one who continues to follow the old religious customs and practices of his people.

4. Do you practice or follow the old religious beliefs and customs of the Yakima tribe?

The degree to which these young people have abandoned the old religious customs has been made apparent in the way this question was answered. Only 20 percent of the group answered this question in the affirmative, and 80 percent answered in the negative. Several have said that they are not members of a Christian church or practitioners of the tribal beliefs. Some of these may be members of the Shaker faith, a nativistic sect, that combines both Christian and tribal beliefs.

5. Does the number seven have a religious significance for you?

In the old Indian religion the seven dancers, seven drummers, and seven singers were a very important element. Seventeen, or 85 percent, had no knowledge of its significance. This is not surprising, since most of the older generation who were questioned about it were unable to explain what it meant. Can it be that the old practices are being allowed to slip away without notice?

6. Do you feel that old Indian customs and ideas which stand in the way of progress should be changed?

Some old Indian customs and values have been lost and others are being changed. One such example of this is

what is happening to the old marriage customs as the old tribal practices slowly give way to the authority of state laws. A large majority of the group no longer practice the tribal religion. One Indian mother, in talking about this problem, made the statement that a good deal of the difficulty lies with the young people, who no longer seem to be interested in learning the old ways.

However, only 25 percent of the students felt that old customs which stand in the way of progress should be changed. The reaction of the students may not be a denial that no changes should take place, but they seem to be opposed to change merely for the sake of change. One girl is thought to have expressed this idea when she qualified her words with "not necessarily." She may have been expressing the unspoken sentiments of the rest of the group.

7. Do you believe in the use of a medicine bundle to ward off illness and disease?

There was a time when virtually every Indian wore charms called "medicine bundles" around his neck in the belief that they would somehow fend off the evil spirits, some of which, among other things, were thought to bring on sickness and disease. Sixteen, or 80 percent do not believe in the use of the medicine bundle. The other four, or 20 percent, provide evidence that there are some who still believe in its use.



8. Would you agree that no disrespect is shown a dead person if his family keeps his personal possessions?

It is customary among those who follow the old traditions to dispose of a dead person's personal possessions after a period of mourning, usually about a year. Then, at a time and place set by custom, these keepsakes are distributed to favored friends and relatives. In the old days failure to make this distribution would have constituted disrespect for the dead person. A great many of the more traditional Indians still feel this way, and every year they meet at an old tribal campground near White Swan for this purpose. Ideas of the young are changing. Seventy percent of the student group said that they no longer agree with this practice.

9. Should one do away with the custom of providing freely for all who might enter your house?

The custom of providing freely for all who enter a person's home is probably as old as the idea of tribal living. In the old days sharing made good sense, because if the hunt was successful, the hunter had more meat than he could use for himself. Also, his means for preserving food were strictly limited and the life he lived did not encourage saving.

It is felt by some, who do not wish to be quoted, that this custom is a source of humiliation and frustration for the Indian. These people believe that many comply

because of social pressure that is often brought to bear. The overriding fear of the Indian of being called a "white man" is exploited, and as a result it is difficult to refuse anything as long as there is something left to share.

The idea of sharing also leads to confusion in school for the young children, especially for those of the more traditional beliefs. Indian students sometimes pick up articles left lying about by other students, apparently feeling that since no one had possession of them at the moment that they are theirs to use and keep if desired. In the eyes of those who are ignorant of this custom, this constitutes theft. The Indian child does not understand punishment for this.

Only 15 percent of the group felt they would like to see this custom discontinued. One person suggested that perhaps they were thinking in terms of the sharing of the tribal assets.

10. Do you value as highly the gift of money to buy a sweater as you do the gift of the sweater itself?

It is a commonly accepted practice for the white man to present money for a gift with the explanation that it is easier and more practical for the recipient to use the money as he chooses. The traditional Indian prefers the gift itself, rather than just the idea of the gift.

Thirteen of the students, or 65 percent, have said

they would just as soon have the money; seven, or 35 percent, said they would rather have the gift of the sweater.

11. Are the values and customs taught in the public schools acceptable to you?

In years past Indian children were often forcibly enrolled in school. The change that the school might make in the attitude and thinking has probably been one of the factors responsible for the reluctance of Indians to accept it. To illustrate, the story has been told of one father who put on a special "sing" for his son after his return from boarding school to guard against anything having gone wrong with him while he was away at school. The feelings of the Indian parents in this respect appear to have been similar to those of the Amish and Hutterite minorities. These people have for years resisted the attempts to force their children into public schools because of their ideas that the things taught there are incompatible with their way of life.

Seventy percent of these students indicated that the values and customs taught in the public schools are acceptable to them.

12. Do you approve of marriages between Indians and Whites?

Seventy-five percent of the students said that they approved of these racially mixed marriages. Historically,

there has been more acceptance of such a marriage by the Indian than there has been on the part of the White, even though the traditional Indian may have disapproved of the White culture.

13. In your opinion will there be more mixed marriages in the future than there are at present?

A very large majority have agreed that in their opinion there will be more mixing of the two races in the future. In the previous question 25 percent were opposed to such marriages. However, 90 percent agreed that the number is going to increase. The number of recent marriages between White and Indian students in this school gives further evidence that the group believes this to be true.

This contradicts what two older tribal members said about this matter a short time ago. They were of the opinion that intermarriage with the Whites no longer posed a problem for the tribe. At that time they were quite sure that the number of such marriages was going to decline.

14. Do you prefer "rock and roll" music and the popular dances to tribal songs and dances?

Fifty-five percent admitted to a preference for modern music and dances. Perhaps this is indicative of the powerful influence that the young sub-culture has on the values selected by young people of all groups. The appreciation of the same things and increased social mixing

helps to break down some of the pre-existing notions about each other.

The response to this question also showed that these students are ignorant about many things in their Indian heritage. One girl who voted with the majority in favor of "rock and roll" and the popular dances qualified her answer and said she might prefer the tribal music and dances if she understood them better. She may have been speaking for other members of the group.

15. Do you watch television and attend movies regularly?

Seventy percent said that they do watch television and attend movies regularly. Six of the group, or 30 percent, indicated that they do not. However, some of these may not have access to television sets in their homes.

Do they have an effect on such things as the way you dress, think, and speak and on the things you think are popular?

In response to this question, 50 percent said yes, while 40 percent said no, and two did not answer. It is the opinion of this group that these mass media do exert an influence in their choice of values.

16. Do you feel that your parents do not understand you?

Fifty percent felt that this is not the case with their parents. There was a considerable amount of disagreement on this question which was shown by the opinions

of eight of the group, or 40 percent, who felt that their parents did not understand them. Two students did not venture an opinion.

17. Is there a "generation gap" between what your parents believe and about tribal customs and how you feel?

Most white teenagers are quick to say that their parents are old-fashioned and more traditional than the younger generation. This descending order of traditionalism is readily admitted to by their parents as well.

The descending order of traditionalism was also felt to be present among members of this group under investigation. Elsewhere in this study they have shown that they no longer follow many of the old customs and beliefs. While older people of the tribe may long for the return of the old days, it appears to be doubtful if these young people would ever be satisfied with the simple life of their ancestors.

In answering this question, 60 percent said that they did not think this was true. Here, there seems to be a difference of opinion between their reaction and that of some of the older people who believed that the generation gap does, in fact, exist. It was pointed out by another Indian that perhaps the reason the young Indian does not feel the presence of a generation gap as much as the young White is that the Indian parent has traditionally

been more permissive than the White parent. Indian parents may not agree with what their children do, but they say less about it than the White parents.

18. Should state laws apply to Indians as well as whites?

Most Indians make no secret of their dislike for, and suspicion of, state laws and state courts. They feel that they have often been treated unfairly by the state and local agencies of government. They think it is easier for an Indian to be arrested than it is for a White man. They prefer their own tribal courts and those of the federal government because here they think they receive fairer treatment. Sixty percent of respondents are still of this opinion, while 40 percent surprisingly felt that state laws should apply to all. Those in the second group may have thought that the special status of the Indian is becoming burdensome. It has also been surmised that some of these in the first group may have been thinking mostly in terms of hunting and fishing rights, since most of them were males.

19. Do you want to continue having your affairs run by the government?

There are several reasons why many Indians want the government to continue running their affairs. Some feel that without the protection of the government they would be cheated out of their share of the tribal property.

Many are afraid to try it on their own, because they have had no experience in running their own affairs. The government has treated them as minors and incompetents for so long that they have come to accept this view of themselves. Fifty percent admitted that they wanted to continue government supervision of their affairs. Almost as large a percentage, 45 percent, said that they would like to run them on their own. Some Indians said that the sentiment expressed by the second group is growing among members of the tribe.

20. Would you like to have the reservation done away with?

The group was overwhelmingly against this suggestion. Ninety-five percent felt that it should be continued. In this respect they expressed the feelings of many of the older people. The older ones have become so dependent on the reservation that they cannot picture themselves as being able to get along in any other way. These tribal members do not feel the culture can survive without it. Others may want to see it continued because, as a tribal member, they are co-owners of large holdings of land and other assets. One person in the group said that "the reservation should continue so that, in case the student didn't make it in college or on off-reservation jobs, there would always be something left." Another, though not a member of the student group, felt that the



Indian would never make it on his own as long as the reservation exists.

21. Is tribal membership becoming less important than it once was to the Indian?

A surprising number, forty-five percent, stated that they felt their membership in the tribe was losing its importance. Fifty-five percent disagreed. It is not known for sure why the first group were of this opinion. It can be conjectured that the role of the tribe may be changing from one of preserving customs and traditions to one that is almost entirely economic in nature. The day might come soon when tribal membership will be more important for its cooperative stores, medical care, insurance plans, etc., than it will be for its cultural ties. The old songs and dances and other old ways may then become nothing more than the occasion for a social time, in much the same way the Whites gather for folk dancing.

22. Is tribal membership going to become less important to you than it has been to your parents?

Seventeen of the group, or 85 percent, said that it would not become less important. This indicates that the students were probably in agreement on this subject with their parents or that they may have been voicing parental attitudes on this matter.

23. Will you continue to live on the reservation after graduation?

Seventy percent reported that they would continue to live on the reservation after graduation. It is thought that many of them were not sure about their future plans, although eight said that they were planning to attend college on scholarships. If these intentions are carried out, it is doubtful that the students would be willing to accept the limited opportunities of the reservation after college. However, it would be to the benefit of the tribe to stop this drifting out process that deprives it of some of its most promising leaders.

## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### SUMMARY

This study sought to determine how graduating Indian students from White Swan High School feel about old Indian customs and values. It also wanted to know something of their attitudes toward the continuation of the reservation.

To achieve this purpose a questionnaire of twenty-three items was devised so that the respondent could record his feelings about the various items of concern by checking a "yes" or "no" reply. The items included questions about their use of their native tongue, religious practices, knowledge and acceptance of old customs, their acceptance of intermarriage between Indians and Whites, the influence of some of the mass media on the way they think and act, the so-called generation gap, and the continuation of the reservation.

The study does not presume to speak for any but those who responded to the questionnaire. It is felt that the data shows the following to be true about that group:

1. The students do not speak or understand the Indian language.

2. They have, to a great extent, adopted the religion and religious practices of the white people.

3. They accept some of the old customs and ways and reject others.

4. They approve of the marriages between the Whites and Indians and think that the number of these marriages will increase.

5. The group recognizes the influence that the various mass media, such as movies and television, have on their thinking, talking, and choice of values.

6. They are not as aware of the existence of a generation gap as are their White contemporaries.

7. They accept the customs and values taught in the public school.

8. They are not in favor of terminating the reservation program.

### CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing it is thought that these students tend to follow the old traditions and customs less closely than their elders. The degree to which this is true has not been fully ascertained because the research did not involve the older people in any but an informal way.

It is further concluded that the young people, through their responses, have indicated a desire for a sort of cultural pluralism that allows them to choose from both

the Indian and White cultures the values and practices that are acceptable to them.

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## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A

To the student:

This is not a test. Do not put your name on these papers. This is a study of your opinions on some matters and old customs pertaining to the Indian. Thank you for your cooperation in making this study possible.



12. Do you approve of marriages  
between Indians and whites? Yes ..... No .....
13. In your opinion will there be more  
mixed marriages in the future  
than there are at present? Yes ..... No .....
14. Do you prefer "rock and roll"  
music and the popular dances  
to tribal songs and dances? Yes ..... No .....
15. Do you watch television and attend  
movies regularly? Yes ..... No .....
16. Do you feel that your parents do  
not understand you? Yes ..... No .....
17. Is there a generation gap between  
what your parents believe and  
teach about tribal customs and  
how you feel? Yes ..... No .....
18. Should state laws apply to Indians  
as well as whites? Yes ..... No .....
19. Do you want to continue having  
your affairs run by the  
government? Yes ..... No .....
20. Would you like to have the  
reservation done away with? Yes ..... No .....
21. Is tribal membership becoming less  
important than it once was to  
the Indian? Yes ..... No .....
22. Is tribal membership going to  
become less important to you  
than it has been to your parents? Yes ..... No .....
23. Will you continue to live on the  
reservation after graduation? Yes ..... No .....

## APPENDIX B

# APPENDIX B

## INTERVIEW RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Question	Yes	F. B. <sup>a</sup>	M. B. <sup>b</sup>	No	F. B.	M. B.	No Ans.
1. Do you speak the Yakima language?	1	1	0	19	8	11	0
2. Do you understand the Yakima language?	3	3	0	17	6	10	1
3. Are you a member of one of the Christian churches?	11	4	7	8	5	3	1
4. Do you practice or follow the old religious beliefs and customs of the Yakima tribe?	4	3	1	16	6	10	0
5. Does the number seven have a religious significance for you?	3	1	2	17	8	9	0
6. Do you feel that old Indian customs and ideas which stand in the way of progress should be changed?	5	2	3	15	7	8	0
7. Do you believe in the use of a medicine bundle to ward off illness and disease?	4	1	3	16	8	8	0
8. Would you agree that no disrespect is shown a dead person if his family keeps his personal possessions?	14	5	9	6	4	2	0

<sup>a</sup>Full Blood

<sup>b</sup>Mixed Blood

# APPENDIX B (continued)

Question	Yes	F. B.	M. B.	No	F. B.	M. B.	No Ans.
9. Should one do away with the custom of providing freely for all who might enter your house?	3	1	2	17	8	9	0
10. Do you value as highly the gift of money to buy a sweater as you do the gift of the sweater itself?	13	7	6	7	2	5	0
11. Are the values and customs taught in public schools acceptable to you?	14	8	6	6	1	5	0
12. Do you approve of marriages between Indians and whites?	15	7	8	5	2	3	0
13. In your opinion will there be more mixed marriages in the future than there are at present?	18	8	10	1	0	1	1
14. Do you prefer "rock and roll" music and the popular dances to tribal songs and dances?	11	2	9	6	5	1	3
15. Do you watch television and attend movies regularly?	14	6	8	6	3	3	0

# APPENDIX B (continued)

Question	Yes	F. B.	M. B.	No	F. B.	M. B.	No Ans.
Do they have an effect on such things as the way you dress, think, and speak and on the things you think are popular?	10	3	7	8	4	4	2
16. Do you feel that your parents do not understand you?	8	2	6	10	6	4	2
17. Is there a "generation gap" between what your parents believe and teach about tribal customs and how you feel?	7	2	5	12	6	6	1
18. Should state laws apply to Indians as well as whites?	8	4	4	12	5	7	0
19. Do you want to continue having your affairs run by the government?	10	6	4	9	2	7	1
20. Would you like to have the reservation done away with?	0	0	0	19	8	11	1
21. Is tribal membership becoming less important than it once was to the Indian?	9	5	4	11	4	7	0
22. Is tribal membership going to become less important to you than it has been to your parents?	3	1	2	17	8	9	0



APPENDIX B (continued)

Question	Yes	F. B.	M. B.	No	F. B.	M. B.	No Ans.
23. Will you continue to live on the reservation after graduation?	14	6	8	3	1	2	3